(b) whether different factions of Akali Dal and the militants are likely to participate in the proposed elections;

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government against such organisations/persons as are openly demanding a right to secede from the country; and

(d) whether the Government propose to hold talks with them for a peaceful settlement of the Punjab problem?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S.B. CHAVAN): (a) A series of steps have been initiated to create conditions in Punjab for a free and fair poll. These include deployment of Army and paramilitary forces to check infiltration of terrorists and smuggling of arms from across the border, provide assistance to the civil authorities give a sense of security to all the people and remove the fear of coersion and intimidation.

(b) It would be for the political parties to decide about their participation in the elections. It is, however hoped that all democratically oriented will participate.

(c) Information is being collected from the state Government and shall be placed on the Table of the House.

(d) The Government believes in finding an amicable solution to all the problems through peaceful means, dialogue and discussions.

Bodo Problem

***148. SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

(a) whether army had to be deployed recently in the Bodo dominated areas of Assam to counter the situation arising out of Bodo militancy;

(b) if so, the total number of casualties due to Bodo violence and the action taken by the army;

(c) whether the Union Government propose to take steps to find a negotiated settlement of the Bodo issue;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the factors that have contributed to the Bodo problem?

THE MINISTER OF HOME ARRAIRS (SHRI S.B. CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Bodo violence has resulted in 76 casualties from 1st January, 1991 till 28.11.1991. six persons have been arrested in army action.

(c) and (d). The Union Government have appointed a Three-Member Expert Committee which has been requested to submit its report by 31.1.1992.

(e) Perceived grievances of the Bodos include disparity in development, suppression of their language and culture, alienation of their land, inadequate representation in public services, and a feeling of non-participation in the management of their affairs.

Shortage of Power

***149. SHRI DILEEP SINGH BHURIA: Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state.**

(a) the estimated shortage of power at present in the country; and

(b) the steps taken by the Government to meet the shortage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CON-